Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK

Department of Health & Human Services
DHHS
NEBRASKA

TO: Nebraska Healthcare Providers & Laboratories

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RE: 2012-13 Influenza Testing Guidelines
DATE: January 25, 2013

Recommendations on Nebraska Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) Influenza Testing

At this point in the course of the 2012-2013 influenza season we are adjusting the criteria for performing confirmatory PCR testing at public health expense on influenza-positive patients. The following represent critical events that we continue to carefully track, and request specimens for confirmatory PCR laboratory testing at NPHL:

- Influenza-positive specimens for any pregnant patient,
- Influenza-positive specimens for any patient admitted to the Intensive Care Unit,
- Influenza-positive specimens for flu-related fatalities
- Surveillance specimens according to established protocol at designated sentinel physician office practices.

For specific clinical laboratory questions (e.g., specimen labeling requirements, collection requirements, or shipping requirements) please contact NPHL client services at 1-866-290-1406 or visit the Nebraska Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) website at http://www.nphl.org/.

To submit an influenza specimen to NPHL, complete the Special Influenza Microbiology Requisition indicating that the specimen meets the criteria for public health testing specified above, http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/Influenza%20Requisition%202012-13.pdf.

When a specimen is submitted, the requisition must include the full name of the submitting facility, phone, fax and a contact name. Label the specimen with the full name and date of birth of the patient. **Specimens will not be tested unless accompanied by the Special Influenza Microbiology Requisition and they meet the criteria for public health testing.** Specimens submitted to NPHL that do not meet testing criteria will be acknowledged with a response that includes the following comment:

"Thank you for submitting this specimen. This specimen does not meet public health testing requirements or was not submitted on the proper requisition therefore will not be tested. You will not receive additional reports for this specimen."